



Prof David Saint *Organ recitalist and choir director.*
He was Principal of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire from 2010 to 2015 and is Organist and Director of Music at St Chad's Cathedral in Birmingham. He is a past Chair of the Royal College of Organists and Incorporated Society of Musicians and current chair of the Incorporated Association of Organists and the Bromsgrove International Music Competition. David is a Fellow of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, the Royal School of Church Music and the Royal Society of the Arts.

Bach's Christmas Oratorio, Lichfield Cathedral, the Birmingham Bach Choir and Paul Spicer: the perfect ingredients for an evening of exhilaration, beauty and deep musical satisfaction. Add to this an outstanding period ensemble, first-class soloists and a full cathedral and you will understand why this listener was simply enthralled from start to finish.

The opening chorus set the standard for the performance. It was stylish, controlled, accomplished – and, oh boy, how it danced! Bach was notoriously unconstrained by any technical limitations of voices and instruments but here everyone rose to the challenges he set.

Among the choral highlights for me were the excited chatter of the shepherds after the angel had told them to go to Bethlehem in *Lasset uns nun gehen gen Betlehem*, the limpid tone of the sopranos as they soared in *Herrscher des Himmelsm*, and the magical unaccompanied chorale *Ich steh an deiner Krippen hier* in which awe, humility and wonder were perfectly conveyed.

Difficult though it is to single out instrumentalists, it would be churlish not to mention the sensational trumpet playing, Kate Fawcett's two exquisite violin obligatos, the superb continuo playing and the rhythmic and musical underpinning provided by the orchestral bass section.

Paul Spicer has directed the Bach Choir for 30 years. Warmest congratulations to him for all he has achieved and long may this partnership continue to flourish!

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